



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell Announces Plans for Local Telephone Competition Rules

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael K. Powell announced today that the Commission will strive to adopt a final order on local telephone competition rules as soon as possible.

“My fellow Commissioners and I will promptly turn to writing a set of sound rules that ensure access to incumbent networks where competition is truly impaired,” said Powell. “I am committed to developing competition rules that comply with the court’s mandate and are faithful to the statutory objectives of the Telecommunications Act. Moreover, the Commission is prepared to consider interim, transitional protections to bridge the gap that exists in the period preceding adoption of our final rules.”

“Fair and sustainable competition is our goal and I am fully confident that consumers will reap the benefits,” said Powell. “Facilities-based competition brings the innovation and value that consumers demand. These new rules will also encourage increased investment in infrastructure that will continue to drive down prices for advanced services. In this interim period, I also strongly encourage carriers to find common ground through negotiation. Commercial agreements remain the best way for all parties to control their destiny.”

Responding to letters sent to him from BellSouth, Qwest, SBC, and Verizon putting in writing commitments not to raise rates for wholesale access, Powell said: “The regional Bell companies have announced that they will not unilaterally increase rates and have guaranteed the status quo until the end of the year. Our top priority is to ensure that consumers do not experience any disruption in service and to provide sorely needed stability in the marketplace.”

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